

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Hearing on “The Obama Administration’s Climate Change Policies and Activities”**  
**Subcommittee on Energy and Power**  
**September 18, 2013**

Today’s hearing is the first time in a long time that this Committee is holding a hearing on climate change. I welcome this hearing, and commend Chairman Upton and Chairman Whitfield for holding it. Climate change is the biggest energy challenge we face and a clear and present danger to the United States and the world.

I also commend the Administration for sending Energy Secretary Ernie Moniz and EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy to testify. It is unusual to have two cabinet secretaries testifying at a subcommittee hearing. Your presence makes it clear how seriously the Administration is taking this hearing.

As Secretary Moniz explains in his statement, the scientific evidence is overwhelming. That is why the President released a comprehensive Climate Action Plan in June. His plan is reasonable; it is affordable; and it will protect our atmosphere for our children and future generations. It will also make our country the global leader in the clean energy economy of the future.

In past hearings and markups and in debates on the floor, Republicans on this Committee and in the House have opposed many elements included in the President’s plan. Last Congress, the House voted 53 times to block action on climate change.

This Congress, the House voted to slash funds for research into clean energy and energy efficiency. House Appropriators voted to eliminate funding for international negotiations on a climate treaty.

And our Committee even refused to listen to the scientists. Over the last two years, Subcommittee Ranking Member Rush and I have written 27 letters requesting hearings on climate change. Until today, no hearing was ever scheduled.

I hope today will mark the start of a change in approach.

That is why my question for House Republicans is simple: What is your plan? If you don't like the President's plan, what is your proposal? The President has said he's willing to listen to other ideas for protecting our planet and fulfilling our moral obligation to future generations. What are yours?

Yesterday, I held a forum with members of the Safe Climate Caucus to hear from Americans who are already experiencing the impacts of climate change. From California to New York and from Iowa to Texas, we heard stories of wildfires, drought, floods, sea level rise, and record temperatures. Their accounts were moving and powerful. These extreme weather events are happening now, and they are costing lives, destroying livelihoods, eliminating jobs, and creating billion-dollar disaster relief bills.

We need to start addressing this enormous threat now. The longer we wait, the more damage we will cause ... the more deeply we will need to cut carbon pollution ... the bigger the bill for taxpayers ... and the farther we will fall behind China and Germany in the race to develop the new energy technologies of the future.

The President was right. We don't have time for another meeting of the Flat Earth Society.

Saying "no" to every solution is not a plan. Doing nothing is not a plan. If all the Republicans on this Committee do today is criticize, they are either denying the science or ignoring it. No one can accept what the scientists are telling us and fail to support a plan of action.

That is why I hope we can move past denial and start a constructive dialogue. Secretary Moniz and Administrator McCarthy have both told me they want to work with stakeholders in implementing the President's plan. They would welcome working with Congress, especially with this Committee, which has vast jurisdiction over the nation's energy policies.

We should listen closely to their testimony today. Where we disagree, let's offer alternative solutions. The climate clock is ticking and too much is at stake for more politics as usual.